

§ 143B-279.9. Land-use restrictions may be imposed to reduce danger to public health at contaminated sites.

(a) In order to reduce or eliminate the danger to public health or the environment posed by the presence of contamination at a site, an owner, operator, or other responsible party may impose restrictions on the current or future use of the real property comprising any part of the site where the contamination is located if the restrictions meet the requirements of this section. The restrictions must be agreed to by the owner of the real property, included in a remedial action plan for the site that has been approved by the Secretary, and implemented as a part of the remedial action program for the site. The Secretary may approve restrictions included in a remedial action plan in accordance with standards that the Secretary determines to be applicable to the site. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, if the remedial action is risk-based or will not require that the site meet unrestricted use standards, the remedial action plan must include an agreement by the owner, operator, or other responsible party to record approved land-use restrictions that meet the requirements of this section as provided in G.S. 143B-279.10 or G.S. 143B-279.11, whichever applies. Restrictions may apply to activities on, over, or under the land, including, but not limited to, use of groundwater, building, filling, grading, excavating, and mining. Any approved restriction shall be enforced by any owner of the land, operator of the facility, or other party responsible for the contaminated site. Any land-use restriction may also be enforced by the Department through the remedies provided by any provision of law that is implemented or enforced by the Department or by means of a civil action. The Department may enforce any land-use restriction without first having exhausted any available administrative remedies. A land-use restriction may also be enforced by any unit of local government having jurisdiction over any part of the site. A land-use restriction shall not be declared unenforceable due to lack of privity of estate or contract, due to lack of benefit to particular land, or due to lack of any property interest in particular land. Any person who owns or leases a property subject to a land-use restriction under this Part shall abide by the land-use restriction.

(b) The definitions set out in G.S. 143-215.94A apply to this subsection. A remedial action plan for the cleanup of environmental damage resulting from a discharge or release of petroleum from an underground storage tank pursuant to Part 2A of Article 21A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, other petroleum sources, or from an aboveground storage tank pursuant to Part 7 of Article 21A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes must include an agreement by the owner, operator, or other party responsible for the discharge or release of petroleum to record a notice of any applicable land-use restrictions that meet the requirements of this subsection as provided in G.S. 143B-279.11. All of the provisions of this section shall apply except as specifically modified by this subsection and G.S. 143B-279.11. Any restriction on the current or future use of real property pursuant to this subsection shall be enforceable only with respect to: (i) real property on which the source of contamination is located and (ii) any real property on which contamination is located at the time the remedial action plan is approved and that was owned or controlled by any owner or operator of the underground storage tank or other responsible party at the time the discharge or release of petroleum is discovered or reported or at any time thereafter. No restriction on the current or future use of real property shall apply to any portion of any parcel or tract of land on which contamination is not located. This subsection shall not be construed to require any person to record any notice of restriction on the current or future use of real property other than the real property described in this subsection. For purposes of this subsection and G.S. 143B-279.11, the Secretary may restrict current or future use of real property only as set out in any one or more of the following subdivisions:

- (1) Where soil contamination will remain in excess of unrestricted use standards, the property may be used for a primary or secondary residence, school, daycare center, nursing home, playground, park, recreation area, or other similar use only with the approval of the Department.

- (2) Where soil contamination will remain in excess of unrestricted use standards and the property is used for a primary or secondary residence that was constructed before the release of petroleum that resulted in the contamination is discovered or reported, the Secretary may approve alternative restrictions that are sufficient to reduce the risk of exposure to contaminated soils to an acceptable level while allowing the real property to continue to be used for a residence.
- (3) Where groundwater contamination will remain in excess of unrestricted use standards, installation or operation of any well usable as a source of water shall be prohibited.
- (4) Any restriction on the current or future use of the real property that is agreed upon by both the owner of the real property and the Department.

With respect to sites contaminated by the discharge or release of petroleum from an aboveground storage tank, or another petroleum source, from which contamination has migrated to off-site properties, as that term is defined under G.S. 130A-310.65(3a), the imposition of restrictions on the current or future use of real property on such a site shall only be allowed if the Department has determined that the requirements of G.S. 143-215.104AA or G.S. 130A-310.73A, as applicable, have been satisfied for the site.

(c) This section does not alter any right, duty, obligation, or liability of any owner, operator, or other responsible party under any other provision of law.

(d) As used in this section:

- (1) "Unrestricted use standards" means generally applicable standards, guidance, or established methods governing contaminants that are established by statute or adopted, published, or implemented by the Environmental Management Commission, the Commission for Public Health, or the Department. Cleanup or remediation of real property to unrestricted use standards means that the property is restored to a condition such that the property and any use that is made of the property does not pose a danger or risk to public health, the environment, or users of the property that is significantly greater than that posed by use of the property prior to its having been contaminated.
- (2) "Risk-based", when used in connection with cleanup, remediation, or similar terms, means cleanup or remediation of contamination of real property to a level that, although not in compliance with unrestricted use standards, does not pose a significant danger or risk to public health, the environment, or users of the real property so long as the property remains in the condition and is used in a manner that is consistent with the assumptions as to the condition and use of the property on which the determination that the level of risk is acceptable is based. (1999-198, s. 1; 2000-51, s. 1; 2001-384, ss. 1, 12; 2002-90, s. 1; 2007-182, s. 2; 2017-209, s. 3(a); 2018-114, s. 18(a).)